

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



October 16, 2003

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO: I-67-03

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- ☐ State Law Change
- ☐ Federal Law or Regulation Change
- ☐ Court Order
- ☐ Clarification Requested by
One or More Counties
- ☒ Initiated by CDSS

SUBJECT: RELATIVE APPROVAL MONITORING PROCESS

The purpose of this All County Information Notice is to notify Child Welfare and Probation Agencies of recent revisions made to the relative approval monitoring process and to provide additional information regarding acceptable documentation submitted for rebuttal to the Children's Services Operations Bureau (CSOB).

As part of a settlement agreement with the Youth Law Center, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) began monitoring county compliance with the relative approved process for relative and non-relative extended family member as required by AB 1695 (Committee on Human Services, Chapter 653, Statutes of 2001) in January 2003. The review uses a randomly selected, statistically valid sample of approved relative and non-related extended family member placements using the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS).

The review looks at five areas, Criminal Record Clearance, Caregiver Qualifications, Safety of the Home and Grounds, Child's Personal Rights, and Training and Orientation. Additionally, the review findings will be categorized by Initial and Annual Assessment type. For cases identified as an Annual Re-Assessment type, the CSOB will be looking to determine that re-assessment activity took place during calendar year 2002.

Sample Methodology

A random sample of cases will be drawn from CWS/CMS for each county. The sample will contain all children identified in CWS/CMS as being in relative or non-related extended family member placements for the county under review as of the last day of the review month. The sample includes cases from both county Child Welfare Agencies and county Probation Agencies. Additionally, the sample could include cases with a foster care aid code that have been referred to adoptions where the adoption had not yet been finalized and non-dependent Legal Guardianships. The sample will also include cases transferred in from another county prior to the last day of the review month.

Communication Protocol Between the Department of Social Services and County

The county CWS Director and Chief Probation Officer will be contacted by either the Operations & Evaluation (O & E) Branch Chief or the CSOB Bureau Chief at the beginning of the review process and again at the conclusion of the review to provide information on the compliance findings. All other communication with the county will be done between the CSOB lead analyst and the identified county contact person.

Review Process

Using CWS/CMS, the CSOB Staff will review online information to determine if the County has documented the information needed to determine compliance with the five areas under review. Since county Probation Departments do not have access to the CWS/CMS, the Probation Department will be required to provide the CSOB with paper documentation to support that the area under review has met the compliance standard.

Rebuttal Matrix

Upon completion of the online review, the CSOB analyst will provide the county contact with a list of the cases that did not initially meet relative assessment/approval compliance requirements. The Rebuttal Matrix will identify only those cases that were found to be out of compliance by the assigned Relative Assessment Sample Number and will identify the subject areas in which the case was found not in compliance.

First Rebuttal Process

The county will be given 15 business days from the date the Rebuttal Matrix is emailed or faxed to the county contact to provide the CSOB with rebuttal documentation supporting or clarifying how each case meets assessment/approval compliance requirements.

Second Rebuttal Process

Once the CSOB staff has reviewed the information submitted by the county as part of the first rebuttal process, they will revise the Rebuttal Matrix to identify the cases and the areas where they could not determine compliance. At this time, the O & E Branch Chief or the CSOB Bureau Chief will contact the County Director and the Chief Probation Officer to inform them of the findings of the review and to provide the county with an additional opportunity to submit rebuttal information. CSOB staff will email or fax the revised Rebuttal Matrix to the county/Probation contact.

The County/Probation Department will have an additional five working days to locate and submit documentation to support that assessment/approval requirements were met for these cases. The county contact should work closely with the CSOB to ensure that they are clear regarding acceptable documentation for the area(s) found out of compliance. The CSOB will contact the county contact when they finish their review of the documentation submitted as part of the second rebuttal. If the county has not achieved the required 90 percent or above compliance level in any subject area, the O & E Branch Chief or the CSOB Bureau Chief will contact the county Welfare Director or Chief Probation Officer with the final findings.

Cases That Will Be Excluded or Rejected From the Review Sample

At this time, the CSOB will exclude the following cases from the review sample. The county will be required to submit documentation to CSOB that supports that the case falls into one of the following categories:

- ICPC (Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children),
- Legal Guardianship (non foster care),
- Non-Dependant Legal Guardianship (non foster care),

- Indian Child Welfare Act placements that document Tribal acknowledgement that a home meets standards for tribal licensing or approval authority in its definition of foster family home,
- Cases where jurisdiction was transferred to another county prior to the first day of the review month,
- Foster Homes licensed prior to the first day of the review month,
- Cases identified removed from the relative or non-related extended family member placement prior to the first day of the review month (i.e. transferred to in-home services or to a non-related foster home),
- Cases closed prior to the first day of the review month,
- Cases where jurisdiction was transferred to the county and a reassessment/approval was not due by the last day of the review month, or
- Conversion of the placement to a placement into a home certified by a Foster Family Agency prior to the first day of the review month.

Compliance Review Report

The CSOB County Consultant will prepare and forward to the county a written compliance Review Report within 30 working days from the conclusion of the second rebuttal process. The report will include a list of the cases that were determined to be out of compliance that require corrective action.

Corrective Action Plan

Subject areas that do not meet the required compliance level of 90 percent will require a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). The CAP should identify for each area found out of compliance:

- A statement(s) of the problem(s);
- A cause(s) of the problem(s);
- A plan objective for correcting the problem(s);
- Implementation and time frames for implementing the corrective actions identified as part of the plan objective, including a projection of when compliance will be achieved; and
- An evaluation component to measure progress.

The CAP will be due 30 days from the date of the final report.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance will be available to those counties that are engaged in a corrective action plan related to CDSS' monitoring results. Those counties with the largest percentages of relative placements will receive the highest priority for technical assistance. Both the CDSS contracted subject matter experts and state staff will be available for such purposes. Given current fiscal limitations on travel, a variety of means will be employed to maximize the technical assistance that will be given. This will include, but not be limited to, attending regional County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) meetings and tele-conferencing.

References

For further information regarding the specific requirement for county compliance with the relative approval process for relative and non-relative extended family members as required by AB1695, refer to the following:

- Article 3 of Title 22, Division 6, Chapter 9.5 of the California Code of Regulation, Manual of Policies and Procedures Sections 420 and 445;
- All County Letter (ACL) 02-78, dated October 24, 2002;
- ACL 02-97, dated December 27, 2002.

For previous information regarding the monitoring process, please refer to ACIN 1-17-03 dated June 12, 2003.

If you have any questions regarding this notice, you can contact me at (916) 657-2614 or you can call Ellie Jones, Bureau Chief, Children's Services Operations Bureau at (916) 323-1672.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed by

SYLVIA PIZZINI
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division

c: CWDA
Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC)